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## Key School buys Annapolis Golf Club

By ALLISON BOURG  
 abourg@cappaznews.com

The Key School's purchase of the Annapolis Golf Club is official.

A spokeswoman for the private school in Hillsmere said Wednesday the school has bought the 70-acre parcel in the Annapolis Roads neighborhood. The price wasn't disclosed.

The school will use the historic golf course for athletic fields and outdoor learning spaces, plans that have angered many neighborhood residents and prompted a civil lawsuit from opponents.

The nine-hole golf course will remain open through October, school spokeswoman Irfan Latimer said.

News of the course's closure saddened longtime members, who said they aren't sure where they are going to play now.

"We've been talking about it, but we haven't been able to come up with a very good alternative," said Gene Ostrom, who has been golfing there for eight years. "It will make kind of an unhappy situation."

Ostrom is part of a group of more than a dozen golfers who play about three times a week, depending on the weather.

This spells the end of an era, though it's not unexpected, golfer Richard Murchake said.

"I know it's been in and out of the courts for a long time," Murchake said.

But Key School leaders trumpeted the sale in a news release sent out Wednesday.

Wes Jones, a member of The Key School's board of trustees and a resident of

Annapolis Roads, said in a release that the acquisition of the course has "changed the legacy of Key School for many decades to come."

"This has been a very thorough and deliberative process," Head of School Marcella Yedid said in a news release. "Throughout, we have remained focused on the benefits this addition to our campus would bring to Key's athletic and environmental programs."

Plans for the course include three athletic fields, eight tennis courts, a baseball diamond, a 1.7-mile nature trail, a pool and a maintenance facility. About 44 acres will be untouched, school officials said.

Missy Attridge, president of the school's board of trustees, and Yedid sent out a letter to parents and others affiliated with The Key School Wednesday morning announcing the sale.

Putting athletic fields in Annapolis Roads will allow the school to make more improvements to its Hillsmere campus, the letter said.

"Among the future priorities is the construction of a theater," Attridge and Yedid wrote.

The school's plans to buy the course were announced in November 2011 and were immediately opposed by many community members. They were concerned about traffic through the neighborhood, as well as lights and noise from the athletic fields on game days.

Opponents formed a group called Preserve Annapolis Roads, and sued, alleging The

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## SCHOOL

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Key School's plans for the course violated long-standing land use covenants.

The covenants, which have been in place for three decades, say the land can be solely used for a golf course, other recreational uses, horticultural nurseries, and conservation and auxiliary uses related to those categories.

Thomas Deming, the attorney representing the Preserve Annapolis Roads citizen group, has argued that educational uses aren't the same as recreational uses.

Following a two-day bench trial in April in Anne Arundel County Circuit Court, Judge Paul Goetzke ruled in The Key School's favor.

Preserve Annapolis Roads has appealed Goetzke's ruling.

Deming had no comment on the sale Wednesday, but said the appeal process would continue.

Latimer said The Key School expects the county to approve its preliminary site plan soon, and the school will move forward with its plans through the appeal process.

Linda Graefe, who owned the course with her husband, George, declined to comment on the sale.

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